



Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet

Raising Rare Sheep – Creating With Wool

Elizabeth Ann Brown Braids Rare Sheep Fleeces into Fine Wool Rugs at Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

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BEREA, Ky. – On Saturday, June 30, Elizabeth Ann Brown, of Mount Sterling, will demonstrate how she creates her wool braided rugs. Brown will braid the many colored wools harvested from her flock of rare breed Leicester longwool and karakul sheep from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea. Brown will also sign copies of her book, “The Shepherds Rug.”

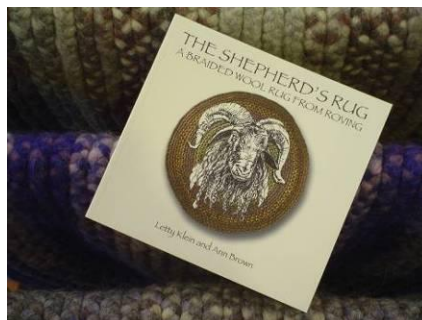


Growing up in the town of Mount Sterling, Brown was always fascinated by sheep. In 1984, she and her husband moved to their 125-acre farm on Grassy Lick Road and began raising sheep. She now tends a flock of 70, including the seven rare breeds of Dorset, Lincoln, English Leicester longwool, Rambouillet, karakul and border Leicester. The fleeces from each breed have a variety of colors and textures – from pale gray, dark gray and soft brown to creamy white. Once common on American farms, these breeds are rare meaning that today there are fewer than 1,000 registered in North America and fewer than 5,000 worldwide.

Brown learned how to spin, and with so much wool on hand, she began making braided rugs, now a full time occupation for her. After shearing her sheep in May, Brown washes and sorts her wool fleeces. She takes her fleeces to a woolen mill to be cut into strips known as roving. She then dyes this wool roving using natural dyes she creates from plants growing on her farm. The dyed wool roving is then braided and sewn to make one-of-a-kind, warm and woolly rugs.

Works by Brown are regularly available at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea, 200 Artisan Way, just off I-75 at Berea exit 77. The center's exhibits, shopping and travel information areas are open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the cafe is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission is free. The center currently features works by more than 650 artisans from 100 counties across the Commonwealth and a special exhibit, “About Face: Kentucky Artisan Works Inspired by the Human Face,” through Aug. 26. For information call 859-985-5448 or visit the center's website at www.kentuckyartisancenter.ky.gov

The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is an agency in the Kentucky Tourism, Arts & Heritage Cabinet.



Elizabeth Ann Brown will sign copies of her book and turn wool braids into rugs at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea